

GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY:—

We have again met according to the provisions of our constitution to transact the public concerns of the state. Suffer me on this occasion, to present to you my friendly salutations ; and to unite with you in sincere acknowledgment to the Great Disposer of human events, for the mercies which, as a community, we have experienced through the last year.

In the enjoyment of a healthful climate, the ravages of pestilence have been unknown to us ; and disease has passed by us almost unfelt. Abundance has crowned the peaceful and honest labours of the husbandman. The axe, the plough, and the loom have received protection and encouragement. All classes of citizens reposing under the security of equal laws and civil and religious liberty, have had reason to rejoice, that they live under a government where the rights of the poor man are alike regarded with those of the rich ; where the aristocracy of wealth or office, if known or felt at all, is accidental and temporary ; where posts of honour and profit are open and accessible to every man ; where the elective franchise is unimpaired and the press unshackled.

As citizens of a sovereign state, forming an integral part of the mighty confederacy which occupies so large a space in the history of nations, we may be permitted to indulge an honest pride, in contemplating the situation of our country.

The government is efficiently administered by men of our own choice. We are at peace with all mankind. Our national banner floats unmolested over every sea. All nations accord to us their admiration and respect. Our public debt instead of increasing with our years,



Our republican institutions with all their simplicity, founded on the intelligence and virtue of the people, have proved themselves worthy of every confidence; and stand, the wonder and dread of tyrants, the praise and delight of freedom's votaries, in every land. The nations of the old world are learning from us lessons in the science of government; and notwithstanding the edicts of royalty or the efforts of princes, the principles of genuine republicanism, of equal privileges, and equal burthens, will become the prevailing principles. Every convulsion, every civil revolution, instead of rivetting more closely, as heretofore, the manacles of oppression, extorts new concessions from the throne; weakens the arm of civil and ecclesiastical power, and adds strength to the claims of legitimate liberty. And this will continue, until those claims shall be fully acknowledged, and the throne and the sceptre crumble into dust.

If we have within ourselves occasional strifes and difficulties, they are productive of benefit rather than injury. They originate in the watchful jealousy of free-men, which spurns at even the form of oppression. They are like the summer storms that sweep over the ocean, defecating it from impurities, and preserving its healthfulness and utility. They lead to the discussion and ascertainment of rights and powers and duties; maintain the spirit of the great national compact; teach us more fully the value of our institutions; and draw more closely the bonds of union.

For the blessings which surround us, we are indebted, under Providence, to the general diffusion of sound, practical knowledge. Where such knowledge pervades the body politic, it is impossible for a people to be otherwise than free.

The importance of education to all classes, is becoming daily more apparent. Legislatures are beginning to feel the magnitude of their responsibilities on



this interesting subject, and to devise the necessary means of imparting knowledge to the rising generation who are soon to be the conservators of the country.

The common school system wherever it has been carried into execution and fairly tested, has uniformly commended itself to the favor of the people. In our state it is yet in its infancy. It has had to contend with opposition of various kinds ; and in reducing it to practice, its best friends have occasionally felt themselves embarrassed. In some parts of the state, its benefits have been distinctly felt by all classes, and it has become deservedly popular.

As no reports can be made to the trustees of the school fund from the different counties until the ensuing spring, I am not able to present to you a view of the operations of the system throughout the state. In some of the counties the money raised for the support of schools, has been at least equal to that furnished by the state. In some, it has exceeded that amount and in others fallen short. Coming as you do from every part of the state, and acquainted with the views and feelings of the people in your different districts, you will be able to represent those views correctly, and suggest such amendments, if the plan be defective, as will better fit it for the great objects of its adoption. In any measures of this character, you may rely upon my cordial co-operation, individually and officially. We have all one common object—that the blessings of education should be enjoyed by every citizen. In this the community is deeply interested ; and in what has already been done, the pledge is given, that the Legislature will continue to exert its wisdom and patronage, until the work shall be fully accomplished.

The operation of the school fund has in all respects realised the anticipations of the trustees. The whole amount of the twenty thousand dollars, being the appropriation for the current year, has been drawn by the collectors of the different counties, and it appears



by the report of the Treasurer to the trustees, that the nett gain, after deducting the appropriation, is one thousand three hundred and forty-six dollars and ninety-nine cents. It is thus proved by the experience of two successive years, that without some casualty, the fund will be able to sustain the annual demand made upon it. The amount of the fund at this time is two hundred and twenty-six thousand, two hundred and fifty-four dollars and ninety-two cents; all of which is believed by the Treasurer and Trustees, to be safely and profitably invested.

Within the past year, I have had occasion, in the discharge of my official duties, to visit the colleges of the state; and I take pleasure in saying, that both are in a prosperous condition. The venerable college of New-Jersey, the Alma mater of so many distinguished men in our country, though for a time depressed by the multiplication of seminaries in other parts of the Union, has recovered from her temporary declension, and is now moving on with her former vigor and success. Rutgers College at New Brunswick, has within a very few years emerged from obscurity; and under the auspices of liberal piety and sound talent, has already attained a respectable standing among the literary institutions of the day. Both of them are now under the direction of able and faithful teachers. They merit the confidence of the community and reflect credit on the state.

In the year 1821, the wants of the indigent deaf and dumb in our state were presented to the Legislature; and a law was passed authorizing the appropriation of any sum not exceeding two thousand dollars per annum, toward their education. Hitherto, owing to a want of information or some other cause, only a portion of that sum has been expended. The appropriation not being specific as to amount, the unexpended balances have uniformly and properly, been taken for other purposes. At the last session the law was altered. The annual sum of two thousand dollars, was set apart as a specific fund



for this benevolent purpose, and the term of instruction was increased to four years; the annual expenses of each pupil, being one hundred and sixty dollars. It affords me pleasure to inform you that the whole of the appropriation is now taken up. Since the first of April last, four beneficiaries have been added to the number, making twelve in all: of whom, nine are at the institution in Philadelphia, and the remainder in New York. And I have every confidence in saying that at both these institutions this unostentatious but noble charity, is faithfully dispensed.

When the law founding this charity was passed, it was in contemplation to establish an institution in our own state for the instruction of deaf and dumb. In some respects this would be desirable. Many parents are unwilling to send their unfortunate offspring a distance from home; and rather than place them beyond the reach of their care, they are suffered to grow up mere blanks in creation. It is manifest however that such an establishment must be, in a great measure, at least, the work of private enterprise; and until it shall have commenced operations, with a favorable prospect of success, the beneficiaries of the state will be sent to New York and Philadelphia as heretofore.

It will be found by the Treasurer's report, that the balance of available funds in the state treasury, is between seven thousand and eight thousand dollars. The common disbursements have been about the same as in former years; but within the year very considerable drafts have been made on the treasury for matters not properly chargeable to the ordinary expenses of the state. Two thousand dollars have been paid, to assist in the formation of a road through the Water Gap in the county of Warren, in virtue of an appropriation made in the session of 1828. Upwards of two thousand five hundred dollars have been disbursed for repairs to the state prison establishment, rendered necessary by the fire, that in February last consumed all the work-shops, with their



furniture. To these must be added the extraordinary claims on the treasury for payment of the costs of criminal prosecutions, and the transportation of prisoners, which have exceeded the amount paid last year for the same objects, nearly one thousand dollars ; and also the costs and expenses incident to the question of jurisdiction and boundary with New York, and the negotiation with Pennsylvania relative to the waters of the Delaware.

Notwithstanding these and other extraordinary demands which will be fully detailed in the accounts of the treasurer, it is not considered that it will be necessary to raise any additional sum for the support of the state the ensuing year. There are no debts to be paid. The expenditure will not be so great by several thousand dollars; and it may be safely calculated that the balance in the treasury at the end of another year, will exceed ten thousand dollars.

The taxes paid by the people for the support of government, are very small in comparison with those paid for the use of the different counties and townships. The assessments for the support of roads, the erection of bridges, and the maintenance of the poor, are far the most burdensome. But although the state tax be small, it is proper that it should be apportioned and assessed on equitable principles. It is well known, that the distribution of this burthen among the different counties is unequal. No just reason can be assigned why it should remain so. The ascertainment of the population in each county by the census lately taken, affords a favourable opportunity to revise this subject in all its bearings, and provide not only for a more equitable distribution of the tax among the several counties, but also among the different classes of citizens in the community, and the various species of property which may be found to be legitimate subjects of taxation. I beg leave to recommend this important branch of the fiscal concerns of the state, to the careful attention of the Legislature.



The acting inspectors of the State Prison, have made a report to me of the situation and concerns of that establishment. It appears from this report, that in the course of the season, it has become necessary to expend considerable sums in repairs and permanent improvements. A large and commodious work-shop has been erected in the yard, and the furniture and implements destroyed by the fire, replaced. These improvements will have a favorable effect upon the discipline of the prison. The convicts are placed more immediately within the view of the keepers; the opportunities for conversation are more limited, and a larger amount of labor is secured. The earnings of the prison this year, exceeds its expenses, exclusive of the costs of conviction and transportation, and the salaries of officers, from five to seven hundred dollars. When it is considered that one half the effective labourers were thrown out of their ordinary employment for two months, in consequence of the destruction of the shops, the result exhibits a change decidedly favorable to the state. There is reason to believe this change will be greater another year. I am satisfied that every effort will be made to render it so, on the part of the inspectors and keeper. At the same time it is greatly to be feared that no ingenuity or effort will enable the establishment to support itself, on the present plan.

If no measures are taken by the Legislature for the erection of a new penitentiary, it will be advisable to authorise some alterations in the old one. The rooms are for the most part badly arranged, and quite too few for the accommodation of the present number of prisoners. Their health and the safety of the prisoners, are endangered by having a number confined together at night in the same apartment; but this is rendered absolutely necessary. As to reformation under such circumstances it is perfectly hopeless.

The expense of constructing additional dormitories in the north wing of the building, could not be very great. The inspectors in 1829, reported to a committee of the



House, that the probable expense of constructing thirty-two additional apartments or cells in one of the wings would be about fourteen hundred and six dollars. Taking this to be near the truth, the sum appears small in comparison with the object to be attained.

The number of prisoners, according to the last report was ninety. In 1828 the number was eighty-seven. It is now, *one hundred and nine*, shewing an increase beyond all former example. This is a remarkable fact, and calls for serious inquiry. May not this extraordinary increase in the number of our convicts, be occasioned, in a great measure, by the situation of our prison? Are we not holding out inducements to the commission of crimes within our state? And will not the evil under our present system continue to increase? And if so, is it not time to commence an efficient reformation? I forbear to enlarge on this subject. My own views in relation to it have been expressed on a former occasion: and I again submit it to the wisdom of the Legislature, confident that they will act in it, with a just regard to the best interests of the state.

By the act of the last session incorporating the Delaware and Raritan Canal Company, there was reserved to the state the right of subscribing for one fourth part of the capital stock of the company, or any smaller amount, in the discretion of the Legislature. This right of subscription is limited to five years from the time the company shall have fixed upon, and agreed to the size, dimensions and routes of the canal and feeder. This has not yet been done in a formal manner. The company have been sedulously employed during the summer, in making the necessary surveys, and, it is understood, are prepared to commence active operations. It may not be necessary for the Legislature at its present session to decide finally on the propriety of embarking in this enterprise; but as the subject is one of interest, and the state is now at liberty to exercise the right reserved to it, I have thought it my duty to present the matter for your consideration.



In the charter of the Camden and Amboy Rail Road and Transportation Company, there is a similar reservation to the state. It ceases however on the first day of January next. After that period, the state can be admitted to subscribe only with the consent of a majority of the stockholders. It will therefore be necessary to act on this subject without delay. The company have commenced their work, and are going on with a fair prospect of success.

Whatever may be the will of the Legislature in relation to the privilege of subscribing to the stock of these companies, I am satisfied, we shall all yield them our best wishes for complete success in their several undertakings. New-Jersey has been tardy in the great cause of internal improvement. Her citizens have at length commenced under favorable auspices, and I indulge the hope that at no distant day, the works that are now in progress will be happily completed, and prove sources of wealth and honour to their proprietors, and to the state.

Accompanying this communication, are various resolutions of the Legislatures of Delaware, Ohio, Kentucky and Louisiana, on the subject of the constitutionality and expediency of the existing tariff laws, and certain resolutions of the Legislature of Connecticut, on the propriety of altering the Constitution of the United States, in that part which directs the mode of electing the President and Vice President.

I have nothing further to submit to you at this time.

May the Spirit of Peace and true Wisdom preside over your deliberations, and direct you to such measures as will effectually advance the prosperity of the state.

PETER D. VROOM, JR.

Trenton, October 28th, 1830.



